## Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

## **Listing of Claims:**

1-8 (canceled).

- 9 (Currently amended). A method of post processing a decompressed image comprising the steps of:
  - (a) selecting a block of image pixels for filtering as a function of a quantization parameter and a quantization parameter threshold;
- (b) detecting an approximate direction of an image edge in a block of image pixels and establishing a filtering axis relatively parallel to said direction, wherein the step of establishing a filtering axis relatively parallel to an image edge in said block comprises the steps of:
  - (i) designating a plurality of candidate axes;
  - (ii) identifying a first pixel and a second pixel located on a projection parallel to a candidate axis, said first pixel located in a vicinity of a first boundary of said block and said second pixel located in a vicinity of a second boundary;
  - (iii) determining a difference between said first pixel and said second pixel;
  - (iv) repeating steps (ii) and (iii) for said plurality of candidate axes; and
  - (v) identifying as said filtering axis said candidate axis
    corresponding to a function of a minimum difference between said
    first and said second pixels;

- (c) identifying a filtering segment comprising a plurality of contiguous pixels arrayed substantially parallel to said filtering axis and intersected by a boundary of said block;
- (d) selectively filtering said pixels of said filtering segment.

10 (canceled).

11 (Original). The method of claim 9 comprising the further step of designating said filtering segment subject to filtering if a pair of pixels of said filtering segment adjacent to said boundary satisfies a predetermined relationship to a threshold.

12 (Original). The method of claim 11 wherein the step of designating said filtering segment subject to filtering a pair of pixels of said filtering segment adjacent to a boundary of said block satisfies a predetermined relationship to a threshold comprises the steps of:

- (a) comparing a difference between said pair of pixels to an upper boundary threshold; and
- (b) comparing said difference between said pair of pixels to a lower boundary threshold.

13 (Original). The method of claim 12 wherein said lower boundary threshold is a function of a quantization parameter for said block.

14 (Original). The method of claim 9 comprising the further steps of:

- (a) designating at least one pixel on each side of said boundary as a filtering range; and
- (b) filtering said pixels of said filtering range.

15 (Original). The method of claim 14 wherein the step of designating at least one pixel on each side of said boundary as a filtering range comprises the steps of:

- (a) selecting a pixel of said filtering segment adjacent to said boundary for inclusion in said filtering range; and
- (b) successively including in said filtering range a next contiguous pixel until a difference between a last pixel included in said filtering range and said next contiguous pixel exceeds a continuity threshold.

16 (Original). The method of claim 15 wherein said continuity threshold is a function of a quantization parameter for said block.

17 (Original). The method of claim 15 wherein said continuity threshold is a function of a difference between a first pixel located in a vicinity of a first boundary of said block and a second pixel located in a vicinity of an opposing second boundary of said block.

18 (Original). A method of post processing a decompressed image comprising the steps of:

- (a) identifying a block of image pixels defined by a block boundary;
- (b) comparing a quantization parameter applicable to said block to a threshold quantization parameter;
- (c) selecting a pixel pair arrayed on each of a plurality of projections parallel to a plurality of candidate filtering axes, if said block quantization parameter exceeds said threshold quantization parameter;
- (d) summing the mean difference between pixels of said pixel pair for each of said plurality of projections for each of said candidate filtering axes;
- (e) selecting said candidate filtering axis corresponding to a least of said sum of said difference between pixels of said pixel pair as a filtering axis;

- (f) identifying a filtering segment comprising a plurality of filtering segment pixels arrayed in a direction parallel to said filtering axis;
- (g) identifying a filtering range comprising at least one said filtering segment pixel on each side of said block boundary; and
- (h) filtering said filtering segment pixels of said filtering range to smooth said decompressed image.

19 (Original). The method of claim 18 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) comparing a difference between pixels of a contiguous filtering segment pixel pair to a continuity threshold;
- (b) repeating step (a) for filtering segment pixel pairs located successively more remote from said block boundary until said difference exceeds said continuity threshold; and
- (c) limiting said filtering range to an array of successively more remote filtering segment pixels on each side of said block boundary; each pixel being a member of a filtering segment pixel pair characterized by said difference being less said continuity threshold.

20-28 (canceled).

28 (Previously presented). A method of post processing a decompressed image comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a block of image pixels for filtering as a function of a quantization parameter and a quantization parameter threshold;
- (b) establishing a filtering axis relatively parallel to an image edge in said block wherein the step of establishing a filtering axis relatively parallel to an image edge in said block in said block comprises the steps of:
  - (i) designating a plurality of candidate axes;

- (ii) identifying a first pixel and a second pixel located on a projection parallel to a candidate axis, said first pixel located in a vicinity of a first boundary of said block and said second pixel located in a vicinity of a second boundary;
- (iii) determining a difference between said first pixel and said second pixel;
- (iv) repeating steps (ii) and (iii) for said plurality of candidate axes; and
- identifying as said filtering axis said candidate axis corresponding to a function of a minimum
   difference between said first and said second pixels;
- (c) identifying a filtering segment comprising a plurality of contiguous pixels arrayed substantially parallel to said filtering axis and intersected by a boundary of said block; and
- (d) selectively filtering said pixels of said filtering segment.

29 (Previously presented). A method of post processing a decompressed image comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a block of image pixels for filtering as a function of a quantization parameter and a quantization parameter threshold;
- (b) establishing a filtering axis relatively parallel to an image edge in said block;
- (c) identifying a filtering segment comprising a plurality of contiguous pixels arrayed substantially parallel to said filtering axis and intersected by a boundary of said block; and
- (d) selectively filtering said pixels of said filtering segment;
- (e) designating at least one pixel on each side of said boundary as a filtering range wherein the step of designating at least one pixel on

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each side of said boundary as a filtering range comprises the steps of:

- (i) selecting a pixel of said filtering segment adjacent to said boundary for inclusion in said filtering range; and
- (ii) successively including in said filtering range a next contiguous pixel until a difference between a last pixel included in said filtering range and said next contiguous pixel exceeds a continuity threshold.; and
- (f) filtering said pixels of said filtering range.

30 (Previously presented). The method of claim 29 wherein said continuity threshold is a function of a quantization parameter for said block.

31 (Previously presented). The method of claim 29 wherein said continuity threshold is a function of a difference between a first pixel located in a vicinity of a first boundary of said block and a second pixel located in a vicinity of an opposing second boundary of said block.